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NEW YORK TIMES
6 DECEMBER 1981

Libyan-Trained Assassin Squad Reported in U.S.

Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has long been convinced that Washington is out to get him. Apparently, he has decided to get Washington first. According to information received by Federal law enforcement officials and reported by The New York Times, a hit squad of five Libyan-trained terrorists entered the United States last weekend with plans to assassinate President Reagan, other senior Administration officials and members of their families.

An informant was said to have given first-hand accounts of the training of the assassins and details of their plans. They included, intelligence officials said, plots to kill the President by shooting down Air Force One with a surface-to-air missile or by blowing up the President's limousine.

Once dismissed as the ravings of a crackpot, Colonel Qaddafi's threats lost their capacity to amuse when he dispatched hit squads around Europe and the Middle East last year. They killed a half-dozen Libyan dissidents. One near-victim was a Libyan national in Colorado. The man accused of the shooting, a former Green Beret, Eugene Aloys Tafoya, was convicted last week on misdemeanor charges of assault.

Since American planes shot down two Libyan jet fighters over Libyan-claimed waters in August, Colonel Qaddafi has been threatening to exact revenge. Libya was suspected as the instigator of the attempted assassination last month of the American chargé d'affaires in Paris and of a plan to kill the American Ambassador to Italy.

The Nation

Summary

Law-enforcement agents were deployed around the country to hunt for the assassination team. Agents questioned Americans with past links to Libya, including former Green Berets recruited by a former C.I.A. man, Edwin P. Wilson, to train terrorists in Libya. There was no evidence that the would-be Presidential assassins had been trained by Mr. Wilson's recruits. President Reagan acknowledged he was taking the threats seriously and said that security had been tightened for senior officials. The White House asked news organizations to refrain from reporting details of the new security measures.

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